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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

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Intelligence Memorandum

Subject: Current Soviet Attitude Toward Peaceful Settlement of the Korean War.

1. Within the last two months there have been a number of reported Soviet peace "feelers" regarding Korea. These "feelers," which have been generally of a low level and devious character, suggest that the USSR would be willing to settle the Korean War on the basis of a return to the status quo ante. Judging from present evidence they probably do not represent more than Soviet efforts to probe the position of the Western powers, and at the same time to open up one or more channels which could be utilized should the USSR decide upon a settlement. For the most part, however, the unacceptable Chinese Communist demands concerning Formosa and seating in the UN have not been mentioned. It may be significant that Soviet propaganda in connection with the Johnson resolution for an armistice in the Korean War omitted reference to these Chinese Communist demands. It may also be significant that some of the reported Soviet approaches developed after the repulse by UN forces of the first phase of the Chinese Communist spring offensive and following the opening on 4 May of the Senate hearings concerning US policy toward the Far East, which made it clear that the US was determined to continue the Korean War in the absence of an acceptable settlement and might in the future feel forced to expand measures against the Chinese Communists.
2. Soviet delegate to the United Nations Malik denied on 28 May, perhaps because of the premature publicity, that the USSR has made any offer to discuss a settlement of the Korean War. According to the Israeli delegation to the UN, Malik on 14 March took the initiative in raising the Korean question, apparently seeking the views of the Israeli delegate as to the possibility of settlement. About 7 April Malik, when asked by a member of the US UN delegation about Soviet objectives in Korea, replied that his government wanted a peaceful solution. This statement merely reiterated the public position taken by the USSR ever since the beginning of the Korean War, first clearly enunciated at the time of the Gromyko-Kelly talks in Moscow during July 1950. On 2 May, during an exchange of views with members of the US delegation, Malik declared that the US definitely does not want a peaceful settlement of the Korean War, but that if a settlement were really desired it might be accomplished through the Paris conference. He said further that the Korean dispute, as well as other outstanding matters, could and should be settled by discussion between the US and Soviet Governments and that the Soviet position on such military discussions is well known. He also stated twice that any settlement must contain honorable terms for all interested parties, apparently referring to Chinese Communist conditions for settlement. Despite these statements, Soviet officials, including

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members of the Soviet delegation to the Deputy Foreign Ministers' meeting at Paris, have not reacted to general, tentative approaches by US representatives. There have been, however, several circuitous feelers which have reached the US through the representatives of neutral countries. They were of such a nature that the Soviet Government was in no way officially associated with them and could, therefore, easily deny their existence.

3. On several occasions during April and May the Yugoslav UN delegate has expressed the view that the USSR may be almost ready for a negotiated settlement. He stated that Stalin's self-interview of 16 February contained a form of Soviet peace feeler despite all its propaganda. The Yugoslav delegate was inclined to believe that the Soviet Government takes a serious view of the present military situation in Korea, since Chinese Communist military setbacks cannot be retrieved without a Soviet intervention which would probably lead to global war -- a situation he thinks the USSR wishes to avoid. If the US were to invade North Korea again and the Soviet Union did not intervene, Soviet prestige would be seriously damaged throughout Asia. The Yugoslav delegate thought that a secret discussion initiated by the US with some Soviet official held promise but that it would be only an initial step to be expanded later into a full-scale conference with at least Chinese Communist participation.

4. The general pattern of Soviet propaganda treatment of the Korean War has not changed since the North Korean invasion of 25 June 1950. While condemning the US for its part in the Korean War, the USSR has carefully avoided the question of committing itself overtly to more than moral support for the Communist forces. The Kremlin's consistent avoidance of any hint of direct Soviet involvement in the conflict permits maximum maneuverability in almost any direction. In any case, current Moscow propaganda does not provide a reliable guide to the intentions of the Soviet Government with regard to Korea, since support for the Communist forces opposing the UN must be reconciled with the USSR's world peace campaign, which is designed to influence the non-Communist masses against their governments.